



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 5
77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD
CHICAGO, IL 60604-3590

JUN 10 2014

REPLY TO THE ATTENTION OF:

E-19J

Laura Leffler
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration, Ohio Division
200 North High Street, Room 328
Columbus, Ohio 43215-2408

Re: Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision for the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor Project, Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, Ohio – CEQ #20140138

Dear Ms. Leffler:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has reviewed the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Record of Decision (ROD) for the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor Project in Cleveland, Ohio provided by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT). Our comments are provided pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality's NEPA Implementing Regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

FHWA and ODOT propose to construct a new roadway, extending from the interchange between I-77, I-490, and 55th Street northeast to the University Circle/Medical Center area at Chester Avenue and 105th Street. The new roadway will connect the University Circle/Medical Center, which is a major employment area, with interstate highways.

EPA provided comments on the Draft EIS on November 14, 2013 and rated the document as EC-2, Environmental Concerns-Insufficient Information. Our comments primarily focused on stormwater management, coordination with agencies and communities, and impacts to communities with environmental justice concerns, including air quality and noise. Per the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP 21), FHWA has elected to issue the Final EIS and ROD concurrently.

EPA finds the discussion and resolution of our Draft EIS comments generally adequate. EPA is pleased to see the integration of the Opportunity Corridor with the Northeast Ohio Region Sewer District (NEORSD) implementation of green stormwater management. EPA also commends ODOT and FHWA for committing to several environmental justice-related mitigation measures, including local job training programs, extension of the E. 105th Street-Quincy Avenue station

train platform, bike/pedestrian bridges across the Corridor to maintain community cohesion, and continued evaluation of bus service enhancements as service demand evolves in the communities along the Corridor.

However, we reiterate the following comments and recommend their consideration as the development of the proposed project moves forward.

- EPA applauds the positive interagency coordination actions ODOT and FHWA have taken during project development. However, the Final EIS/ROD doesn't describe these actions well. For instance, EPA is aware of ODOT and FHWA's participation in the Neighborhood Development Subcommittee of the Opportunity Corridor Steering Committee that has been organized by the Greater Cleveland Partnership. ODOT's participation could have been mentioned in the Final EIS/ROD, given it is one of the most effective mechanisms for public outreach and dissemination of information on the project. Given ODOT's participation, the Final EIS/ROD should have included future objectives of the steering committee. Also, there is only minor mention of the EPA-NEORSO stormwater agreement and how the Opportunity Corridor will be integrated into the provisions of that agreement. The Final EIS/ROD should have included more details about the benefits of the agreement.
- EPA recommends ODOT and FHWA continue to keep stakeholders, including EPA, informed of the green infrastructure and stormwater management plans as the project moves forward. We also encourage ODOT and FHWA to consider incorporating green infrastructure and stormwater management measures in future road projects.
- EPA reminds ODOT and FHWA that continued coordination with communities living with environmental justice concerns should be a priority. We encourage ODOT and other parties involved with the Opportunity Corridor Steering Committee to meaningfully engage communities living with environmental justice concerns.
- EPA encourages ODOT and FHWA to continue coordination with our Transportation Conformity manager for Ohio, Anthony Maietta, at 312-353-8777. We understand there are local air quality concerns associated both with construction of the Opportunity Corridor and new facilities that will be located within the Corridor after construction. Therefore, EPA recommends several diesel emission reduction measures, which are detailed in the enclosed *Diesel Emission Reduction Checklist*.
- Finally, EPA commends the public outreach efforts that ODOT and FHWA have initiated, particularly work with the Community Development Corporations and the NEORSO. EPA finds ODOT's coordination efforts to be responsive.

Thank you again for your consideration of our comments. We look forward to continuing to work with you as the proposed project moves forward.

Sincerely,



Kenneth A. Westlake
Chief, NEPA Implementation Section
Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance

Enclosure: Diesel Emission Reduction Checklist

cc: Noel Mehlo, Federal Highway Administration – Ohio Division
Steven Clark, Federal Transit Administration
Larry Hoffman, Ohio Department of Transportation
Brian Mitch, Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Lucy Miller, Housing and Urban Development
Stephen Cerny, Housing and Urban Development

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Diesel Emission Reduction Checklist

- Using low-sulfur diesel fuel (15 parts per million sulfur maximum) in construction vehicles and equipment.
- Retrofitting engines with an exhaust filtration device to capture diesel particulate matter before it enters the construction site.
- Positioning the exhaust pipe so that diesel fumes are directed away from the operator and nearby workers, thereby reducing the fume concentration to which personnel are exposed.
- Using catalytic converters to reduce carbon monoxide, aldehydes, and hydrocarbons in diesel fumes. These devices must be used with low sulfur fuels.
- Using enclosed, climate-controlled cabs pressurized and equipped with high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters to reduce the operators' exposure to diesel fumes. Pressurization ensures that air moves from inside to outside. HEPA filters ensure that any incoming air is filtered first.
- Regularly maintaining diesel engines, which is essential to keep exhaust emissions low. Follow the manufacturer's recommended maintenance schedule and procedures. Smoke color can signal the need for maintenance. For example, blue/black smoke indicates that an engine requires servicing or tuning.
- Reducing exposure through work practices and training, such as turning off engines when vehicles are stopped for more than a few minutes, training diesel-equipment operators to perform routine inspection, and maintaining filtration devices.
- Purchasing new vehicles that are equipped with the most advanced emission control systems available.
- Using electric starting aids such as block heaters with older vehicles to warm the engine reduces diesel emissions.
- Using respirators, which are only an interim measure to control exposure to diesel emissions. In most cases, an N95 respirator is adequate. Workers must be trained and fit-tested before they wear respirators. Depending on work being conducted, and if oil is present, concentrations of particulates present will determine the efficiency and type of mask and respirator. Personnel familiar with the selection, care, and use of respirators must perform the fit testing. Respirators must bear a NIOSH approval number. Never use paper masks or surgical masks without NIOSH approval numbers.